

National Training Center and Headquarters US Army Garrison Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office

Workplace Violence Prevention Program

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What Is Workplace Violence?

- Workplace violence can be any act of physical violence, threats of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. Workplace violence can affect or involve employees, visitors, contractors, and other non-Federal employees.
- A number of different actions in the work environment can trigger or cause workplace violence. It may even be the result of non-work-related situations such as domestic violence or “road rage.” Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, co-worker, customer, family member, or even a stranger. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated.

The following are warning indicators of potential workplace violence:

- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior.
- Numerous conflicts with customers, co-workers, or supervisors.
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace (unless necessary for the job), making inappropriate references to guns, or making idle threats about using a weapon to harm someone.
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides.
- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide.
- Direct or veiled threats of harm.
- Substance abuse.
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors.



Prevention of Workplace Violence

- There is no sure way to predict human behavior and, while there may be warning signs, there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. The best prevention comes from identifying any problems early and dealing with them. The NTC Fort Irwin has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in place which serves as an excellent, confidential resource available to all employees to help them identify and deal with problems.
- If you ever have concerns about a situation which may turn violent, alert your supervisor immediately and follow the specific reporting procedures provided by your agency. It is better to err on the side of safety than to risk having a situation escalate.



Being Proactive



Once you have noticed a subordinate, co-worker, or customer showing any signs of the above indicators, you should take the following steps:

- If you are a co-worker, you should notify the employee's supervisor immediately of your observations.
- If it is a customer, notify your supervisor immediately.
- If it is your subordinate, then you should evaluate the situation by taking into consideration what may be causing the employees problems.
- If it is your supervisor, notify that person's manager.
- It is very important to respond appropriately, i.e., not to overreact but also not to ignore a situation. Sometimes that may be difficult to determine. Managers should discuss the situation with expert resource staff to get help in determining how best to handle the situation. (EEO, EO,SJA, DES, CID and Garrison Commander)



Workplace Violence



Most people think of violence as a physical assault. However, workplace violence is a much broader problem. It is any act in which a person is abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted in his or her employment. Workplace violence includes:

- ▶ Threatening behavior - such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects.
- ▶ Verbal or written threats - any expression of an intent to inflict harm.
- ▶ Harassment - any behavior that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms or verbally abuses a person and that is known or would be expected to be unwelcome.
- ▶ This includes words, gestures, intimidation, bullying, or other inappropriate activities.
- ▶ Verbal abuse - swearing, insults or condescending language.
- ▶ Physical attacks - hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking.



Workplace Violence



- ❑ Rumors, swearing, verbal abuse, pranks, arguments, property damage, vandalism, sabotage, pushing, theft, physical assaults, psychological trauma, anger-related incidents, rape, arson and murder are all examples of workplace violence.
- ❑ Workplace violence is not limited to incidents that occur within a traditional workplace. Work-related violence can occur at off-site business-related functions (conferences, trade shows), at social events related to work, in clients' homes or away from work but resulting from work (a threatening telephone call to your home from a coworker, supervisor/manager).

Preventing Workplace Terrorism and Other Violence

- Workplace Violence is now the **third leading cause of occupational death** and the fastest growing type of homicide in the U.S. It is now becoming even a greater problem with the potential for workplace terrorism.
- The cost of Workplace Violence is about **\$4 Billion** annually – including property damage, lost productivity, lost sales and negligence lawsuits.
- The causes, of course, are many and varied – from potential issues (in the case of terrorism) to the hierarchical supervisors that don't listen or communicate, to downsizing and reorganization, jobs moving to the third world, unfair treatment of employees, employee stress, rapid organizational change, social issues (drugs, alcohol, family problems), etc.
- Employers can be held liable for Workplace Violence when it can be shown there was negligent hiring, negligent retention and/or inadequate safeguards to provide a “safe and healthful workplace environment.”



Proactive Measures



- ▮ Awareness training for employees – to spot those exhibiting potential violent behavior tendencies
- ▮ A process for intervening with and/or for reporting violent behaviors and potential incidents **BEFORE** they occur
- ▮ A response plan for dealing with violent acts **AFTER** they occur
- ▮ Secure facilities
- ▮ Each manager/supervisors has the responsibility to ensure that each individual in the workplace is working in an free and healthy working environment